

A Brief Guide

In the Christian Doctrine
For Adult Catechumens

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Revised and updated

PREFACE

This booklet was originally written as "a manual for the instruction of adults preparatory to membership in the church." It is fruit of the work of the forty years of ministry of the sainted Rev. Frank F. Selle. The edition of 1953 was published by Northwestern Publishing House in Milwaukee and edited by Pastor Selle's son, the sainted Rev. Victor M. Selle.

The booklet has also proved useful as a guide for the examination of junior confirmands. It is for that purpose that it is here presented in a revised format, using the text of the New International Version of the Bible, as well as quotations from Lutheran Worship for certain liturgical portions (Apostle's Creed, Words of Institution, Confession of Sins).

The following words written for the 1953 edition remain true today as well:

It is our prayer that this little booklet will continue to serve as a "Guide" to help lead many to a knowledge of their Savior and to the attainment of life eternal. May God, for whose glory alone this booklet has been written, continue to bless its mission.

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THE BIBLE

1. Which book presents to us the teachings of the Christian religion?
The Bible. (Holy Scriptures)
2. Into how many parts is the Bible divided?
Into two parts, the Old and the New Testament.
3. Who wrote the Old Testament?
The Prophets. (39 books)
4. In which language was the Old Testament originally written?
In the Hebrew language.
5. Who wrote the New Testament?
The Evangelists and the Apostles. (27 books)
6. In which language was the New Testament originally written?
In the Greek language.
7. How was the Bible made available to all people?
By translations. (More than 1800 translations.)
8. How was the Bible written in its original form?
By inspiration of God. (God gave the writers the very words which they wrote.)
"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness ..."
2 Tim. 3:16
9. Whose Word, then, is the Bible?
God's Word. 1 Cor. 2:13
10. For what purpose did God give us His Word?
To read it, to believe it, and to be saved by it.
"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me." John 5:39
11. Which are the two great doctrines (teachings) of the Bible?
The Law and the Gospel.
12. What does the Law of God tell us?

How we are to be, what we are to do and not to do.

"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." Leviticus 19:2

13. What is the Gospel?
The good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ.
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

THE LAW OF GOD

14. When did God first give His Law to man?
At the time of creation.
15. How did He give it?
He wrote it into man's heart. Rom. 2:14,15
16. By what was man's knowledge of God's Law obscured?
It was obscured by sin. Romans 7:7,8
17. When did God give His Law for the second time?
Fifteen hundred years before Christ.
18. How did He then give it?
He wrote it on two tables (tablets) of stone.
19. Through whom did He make it known?
Through Moses. Ex. 20; 24:12
20. How many Commandments does the Law of God contain?
Ten.
21. How do they read?
 1. **You shall have no other gods.**
 2. **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord, your God.**
 3. **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
 4. **Honor your father and you mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.**
 5. **You shall not murder.**
 6. **You shall not commit adultery.**
 7. **You shall not steal.**
 8. **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
 9. **You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
 10. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or**

maidservant, his ox or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

22. How does God want us to keep these Commandments?
He wants us to keep them perfectly.
"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matt. 5:48
23. In which two Commandments does Christ sum up the whole Law?
a.) *"Love **the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* Matt. 22:37
b.) *"Love **your neighbor** as yourself."* Matt. 22:39
24. Have we kept the Commandments of God perfectly?
No, we have not.
"All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." Ps. 14:3
25. What, then, are we?
We are sinners.
26. How many kinds of sin are there?
There are two kinds, original sin and actual sin.
27. What is original sin?
It is the sin in which we were born. (Our corrupt nature Ps. 51:5; our sinful flesh John 3:6)
28. What is actual sin?
It is a sin which we commit. (Sins of commission.)
29. How does actual sin manifest itself?
In evil desires, thoughts, words, and deeds.
30. Is it also a sin when we neglect to do what we should?
Yes. (Sins of omission.)
"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." James 4:17
31. With what does God threaten all that hate Him or transgress His Commandments?
He threatens us with His wrath, temporal death, and eternal damnation.
"The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23

32. What does God promise those who love Him and keep His Commandments?
Eternal life.
"Do this and you will live." Luke 10:26
33. Can anyone obtain eternal life, or be saved by his/her good deeds?
No. Rom. 3:20
34. Why can we not be saved by our good deeds?
Because by nature we cannot keep the Law of God at all; and even after our conversion we can keep it only imperfectly.
"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Is. 64:6
35. Who has fulfilled the Law of God for us and thereby redeemed us?
Jesus Christ. Gal. 4:4,5
36. What did Jesus gain for us by His perfect obedience to His heavenly Father?
A perfect righteousness. Rom. 10:4
37. In what message is Christ's righteousness freely offered to all people?
In the Gospel.
38. How do we obtain this righteousness?
By faith in Him.
"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Acts 16:31

THE APOSTLES' CREED

39. What do we call a statement of what we believe and teach?
A creed. (The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed.)
40. Why are the statements of our first Christian Creed called the Apostles' Creed?
Because they contain the doctrines (teachings) of the Apostles of our Lord.
41. How many Articles does the Apostles' Creed contain?
Three articles.

THE FIRST ARTICLE

42. How does the First Article of the Apostles' Creed read?
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
43. What does this Article discuss?
Creation.
44. Why do we in each Article of the Creed confess "I" and not "we" believe?
Because every one must believe for himself to be saved.
"The righteous will live by his faith." Habakkuk 2:4
45. What does it mean "to believe in God"?
To have confidence in God.
46. Who is the true God?
The Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine Being. (Holy Trinity)
"Hear, O Israel: The Lord, our God, the Lord is one." Deut. 6:4
*"...Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**".* Matt. 28:19
47. What is God?
God is a spirit (He is eternal, almighty, omnipresent, all-knowing, holy, merciful).
"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24
48. Why do we call the First Person in the Trinity "the Father"?
Because He is the Father of Jesus and also of all believers.
49. Why do we call the Father "Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"?
Because He made all things out of nothing. Gen. 1
50. Which are the foremost invisible creatures?
The angels.
51. How many kinds of angels are there?
Two kinds, the good angels and evil angels.
52. What does the Bible tell us about the good angels?
They are holy spirits, of great number and power, who serve God and the believers. Luke 2:13; Heb. 1:14

53. What does the Bible tell us about the evil angels?
They are fallen powerful spirits, who seek to destroy the works of God. 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 5:8,9.
54. Which is the foremost visible creature?
Mankind (Human beings).
55. Why is man the foremost visible creature?
Because God made him in His image and gave him a rational soul. Gen.1:27; Gen. 2:7
56. How did man lose the image of God?
By falling into sin. Genesis 3:6
57. How does God still care for me and all His creatures?
He preserves and protects us. Ps. 145:15,16; Matt. 10:29,30.
58. What moves Him to do this?
His fatherly love. Ps. 103:13
59. How should we show our gratitude to Him for His great love to us?
We should thank and praise, serve and obey Him. Ps. 118:1

THE SECOND ARTICLE

60. How does the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed read?
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
61. What does this Article discuss?
Redemption.
62. Who redeemed us?
Jesus Christ.
63. What does the word "Jesus" mean?
Savior. Matt. 1:21.

64. What does the word "Christ" mean?
The Anointed. (The Messiah)
65. Why is Jesus called the Anointed?
Because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His Baptism. Ps. 45:7; Mark 1:10
66. For what threefold office was He anointed?
For the office of Prophet, Priest, and King.
67. Who is Jesus Christ?
He is "**True God,**" begotten of the Father from eternity, and also "**true man,**" born of the Virgin Mary. (God and man in one person, the God-man.)
1 John 5:20; 1 Tim. 2:5
68. What do the Scriptures tell us about the conception of Jesus?
That He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (A sinless conception.) Luke 1:35
69. What do the Scriptures tell us about His birth?
That He was born of the Virgin Mary. Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23
70. Where was Jesus born?
In Bethlehem (Christmas.) Luke 2:1-14
71. In which city did He grow up?
In Nazareth. Luke 2:51
72. How old was Jesus when He began His public ministry?
Thirty years old. Luke 3:23; 4:14
73. What did He do during His public ministry?
He continued to live a perfect life, preach the Gospel, and performed many miracles.
74. How many years was He engaged in this work?
Three.
75. How many men did He call to be His apostles?
Twelve, + later, Paul. Mark 3:14-19. Acts 9:1-22
76. Which of the Twelve betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies?
Judas Iscariot.

77. Under whom did Jesus suffer?
Under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.
78. How did His enemies abuse Him?
They falsely accused, mocked, scourged, and finally crucified Him.
79. On which day of the week was Jesus crucified?
On Friday. (Good Friday)
80. Where was He crucified?
On Mount Calvary. (Near the city of Jerusalem)
81. How many times did He speak from the cross?
Seven.
82. For whom did Jesus suffer and die?
For lost mankind. (Our Substitute)
"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Is. 53:5
83. How did His innocent suffering and death benefit you?
He has redeemed me a lost and condemned person.
84. From what did He redeem us?
From sin, death, and the power of the devil.
85. For what purpose did He redeem us?
That we might be His own and serve Him in His kingdom. 2 Cor. 5:15
86. What do Scriptures tell us about the burial of Jesus?
That His body did not decay after His burial. Ps. 16:10
87. For what purpose did He, after having been made alive, descend into hell?
To proclaim His victory over His enemies. 1 Pet. 3:19
88. On which day did He arise from the dead?
On the third day. (Easter)
89. What does His resurrection from the dead prove?
1. That He is the Son of God. Rom 1:4
2. That His Father accepted His sacrifice for our sins. Rom. 4:25
3. That all believers will rise unto eternal life. John 14:9

90. For how many days after His resurrection did Jesus show Himself alive to His disciples?
Forty days. (Eleven appearances)
91. To where did Jesus ascend on the fortieth day?
Into heaven. (Ascension Day) Acts 1:9
92. What blessing did He bestow upon His disciples ten days later?
The gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1ff. (Pentecost. The founding of the Christian Church)
93. What does the Bible teach of Christ's sitting on the right hand of God?
That Christ, in His human and divine nature, now rules all things for the benefit of His church. Eph. 1:20-23
94. When will He return to this world?
On the Last Day. Acts 1:11
95. How will He return?
In great glory. Matt. 25:31
96. For what purpose will He return?
To judge the living and the dead. Acts 17:31
97. When will Christ return?
No man knows. (Many signs, however, point to the nearness of that Day. Matt. 24:6ff.; 2 Thess. 2)
"No one knows about that day or hour." Mark 13:32

THE THIRD ARTICLE

98. How does the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed read?
I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
99. What does this Article discuss?
Sanctification.
100. Who sanctifies us, or makes us holy?
The Holy Spirit.

101. Who is the Holy Spirit?
The Third Person in the Trinity. Matt. 28:19
102. How does the Holy Spirit sanctify us, or make us holy?
He brings us to faith in Christ and imparts Christ's merits to us. (Conversion, regeneration, or the second birth) 1 Cor. 6:11
103. By what means does He do this?
He has called me by the Gospel.
"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." Rom. 1:16
104. Why can we not convert ourselves?
Because we are by nature dead in sin.
"You were dead in your transgressions and sins." Eph. 2:1
105. What does the Holy Spirit do for us after bringing us to faith?
By means of the Gospel He keeps us in the one true faith. 1 Pet. 1:5
106. To what, therefore, do we owe our whole spiritual life?
To God's undeserved grace.
"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." Eph. 2:8,9
107. What do we call the whole number of those who believe in Christ as their Savior?
The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. Eph. 2:19; 4:4-6
108. Why are the believers called "the Communion of Saints"?
Because they are made holy by faith in Christ. Romans 8:1
109. Is the Christian Church visible or invisible?
It is invisible.
110. Why is it invisible?
Because we cannot look into a man's heart and see whether he believes. 2 Tim. 2:19
111. Whom do we mean when we speak of visible churches?
Christian denominations or congregations.

112. What kind of people, besides the true believers, are there in the visible churches?
Hypocrites. (The net with fish of every kind. Matt. 13:47)
113. Which is the true visible church?
That church which teaches God's Word in all its purity. John 8:31,32
114. What is our duty toward this church?
To join it and to support it. 1 Cor. 16:2
115. What is our duty in regard to churches which teach false doctrine?
To avoid them. Romans 16:17; Galatians 5:9
116. Even though we are in membership with the church, what is still our greatest need?
The forgiveness of sins.
117. Who alone can forgive sins?
God. Mark 2:7
118. For whose sake does God forgive sins?
For Jesus', our Savior's, sake. Eph. 1:7
119. Where does He offer us the forgiveness of our sins?
In the Gospel.
120. How do we obtain this forgiveness?
By faith in Christ.
121. Can we, who believe in Jesus, be sure of the forgiveness of our sins?
Yes, for God has promised it to us.
"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Is. 1:18
122. What is this doctrine, that God forgives us our sins for Christ's sake through faith, called?
The doctrine of justification. (To justify a man means to declare him righteous.)
123. Why is this doctrine of utmost importance?
Because only the assurance of free and full forgiveness can give us true comfort in life and death. Matt. 9:2

124. What do we believe regarding the resurrection of the dead?
That all the dead will be raised on the last day. John 5:29
125. Unto what will the unbelievers be raised?
Unto damnation in hell. John 5:29
126. What is hell?
A place of torment, shame, and of eternal separation from God. Is. 66:24; Matt. 25:41
127. Unto what will all believers be raised?
Unto life everlasting.
128. What kind of life will that be?
A life of never-ending joy and glory in heaven.
"You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Ps. 16:11
129. To whom has Jesus promised this blessing?
To every believer.
"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." John 3:36
130. When will the believer enjoy eternal life in its fullness?
According to his soul at the time of his death; according to body and soul on the day of his resurrection.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

131. What is prayer?
A Christian's heart to heart talk with God.
(Petitions, intercessions, prayers of thanksgiving.)
132. To whom should we pray?
To the true God alone. (Not to false gods or to saints) Matt. 4:10
133. What should move us to pray?
God's command and promise.
"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me." Ps. 50:15
134. How should we pray?
In the name of Jesus, that is, trusting that God will hear us for the sake of Jesus, our Savior.

*"My Father will give you whatever you ask **in my name.**"* John 16:23

135. What should we ask of God in our prayers?
Whatever we need. Philippians 4:6
136. Which words should we add when we pray for temporal blessings?
"If it be Your will." Matt. 8:2
137. For whom should we pray?
For all men, even for our enemies, but not for the souls of the dead. 1 Tim. 2:8; Matt. 6:6 Ps. 26:12
138. Where should we pray?
Everywhere, especially in the privacy of our home, and in public worship. 1 Tim. 2:8; Matt. 6:6; Ps. 26:12
139. When should we pray?
At all times, especially when we are in trouble, and when we experience God's help. 1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 17:11-18
140. Which are the best times of the day for prayer?
Morning, evening, before and after meals.
141. Can we be sure that God will answer every proper prayer?
Yes, for He has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear us.
142. When and how will God answer every proper prayer?
At His time and in His own manner. (Mary's prayer, John 2:4. Paul's prayer, 2 Cor. 12:8,9)
143. Which is the best of all prayers?
The Lord's Prayer.
144. How does the Lord's Prayer read?
Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4
145. Why is this Prayer called the Lord's Prayer?
Because our Lord Jesus gave it to us.

146. How do we divide the Lord's Prayer?
Into the Introduction, the Seven Petitions, and the Conclusion.
147. How does the Introduction of the Lord's Prayer read?
Our Father who art in heaven.
148. Why does Jesus teach us to address God as "our Father"?
That with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father.
149. For what do we pray in the First Petition?
That God's name may be **kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it.**
150. For what do we pray in the Second Petition?
That the kingdom of God may come **when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word...**
151. For what do we pray in the Third Petition?
That God's will be done **when He breaks and hinders every evil plan ... and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.**
152. For what do we pray in the Fourth Petition?
For our daily bread, that is, **everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body.**
153. For what do we pray in the last three Petitions?
For deliverance from evil. (Deliverance from sin, from temptation to sin, and from the evils of body and soul, of property and honor.)
154. How does the Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer read?
"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever."
155. What do we state in the Conclusion about our heavenly Father?
That He is the King, from whom we should seek our help.
That He alone has the power to grant our requests.
That all glory shall be His alone for the blessings received.
156. What is meant by the word "Amen"?
Yes, it shall be so.

THE SACRAMENTS

157. What is a Sacrament?
A Sacrament is a sacred act, instituted by God, wherein He by certain visible means, connected with His Word, offers, gives, and seals unto us the forgiveness of sins which Christ has earned for us.
158. How many such Sacraments are there?
Two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

BAPTISM

159. Which is the first Sacrament?
Baptism.
160. What is Baptism?
Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.
161. What does the word "baptize" mean?
To apply water in any form.
162. With what is the water in Baptism connected?
With the word of Jesus.
163. How many words of Jesus have we concerning Baptism?
Two, His command and His promise.
164. How does His command concerning Baptism read?
"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19
165. Who is to be baptized?
All human beings, young and old.
166. When should adults be baptized?
After they have been instructed in the doctrines of the Christian religion. Acts 8:29-39.
167. When should infants be baptized?
Soon after birth.
"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14.

168. Why should infants be baptized?
a) Because they are included in "all nations."
b) Because Baptism is the only means whereby they can ordinarily be born again and brought to faith in their Savior. John 3:5,6.
169. For what purpose have sponsors been introduced at the baptism of infants?
To testify that the child has been properly baptized; to pray for it; and to assist in its Christian education.
170. How does the promise of Jesus concerning Baptism read?
"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." Mark 16:16.
171. What, according to these words, is the blessing of Baptism?
Forgiveness of sins.
"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:39.
172. Who receives this blessing?
Everyone who believes in Jesus.
173. Can anyone be saved without Baptism?
Yes, if he believes, but has not the opportunity to be baptized. (The penitent thief on the cross. Luke 23:43)
174. How should we, who have been baptized, show in our daily lives that we are children of God?
We should daily put off the old man (sin) and put on the new man (holiness). Rom. 6:3,4.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

175. Which is the second Sacrament?
The Lord's Supper. (Holy Communion.)
176. What is the Lord's Supper?
It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.
177. When did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
On the night in which He was betrayed. (Maundy Thursday.)

178. How do the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper read?
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat; This is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. Matt. 26:26-28. Mark 14:22-24. Luke 22:19, 20. 1 Cor. 11:23-25.
179. For whom did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
 For all Christians.
180. What does He give us with the bread in the Lord's Supper?
 His body.
181. What does He give us with the wine in the Lord's Supper?
 His blood.
182. How do we receive bread and wine in the Lord's Supper?
 In a natural way.
183. How do we receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper?
 In a supernatural way.
184. Why do we believe that we receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper?
 Because He said, "This is my body; this is my blood."
185. For what purpose does Jesus give us His body and blood in the Lord's Supper?
 For the strengthening of our faith and the forgiveness of our sins.
186. Who is a worthy and well prepared communicant at the Lord's table?
That person who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."
187. Who is an unworthy communicant?
 He who does not believe these words.

188. Why is Communion harmful to unbelieving communicants?
 Because they eat and drink damnation (judgment which makes them liable to punishment) unto themselves. 1 Cor. 11:28,29
189. What should everyone, therefore, do before he partakes of the Lord's Supper?
 He should examine himself. 1 Cor. 11:28,29
190. How should he examine himself?
 He should ask himself whether he is truly sorry for his sins, believes in Jesus as his Savior, and has the sincere intention to lead a better life.
191. How often should we partake of the Lord's Supper?
 Frequently.
"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Cor. 11:26)
192. What should encourage us to commune frequently?
 The Lord's command, *"This do in remembrance of Me."*
193. To whom must the Lord's Supper be denied?
 a. To those known to be impenitent.
 b. To those who have given offense and not removed it. (Matt.5:23,24)
 c. To those not able to examine themselves. 1 Cor. 11:28
 d. To those of a different faith.

CONFESSION

194. What is Confession?
Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing, that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.
195. What is the first part of Confession?
 That we confess our sins.
196. How does our Confession of sins, which we make before partaking of the Lord's Supper, read?
Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You

with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen. (from Divine Service II, Lutheran Worship)

197. What is the second part of Confession?
That we receive absolution, or forgiveness of sin.
198. By whom is this absolution pronounced?
By the pastor, the called and ordained servant of God. 2 Cor. 2:10
199. Who receives the grace of God offered in this absolution?
All who penitently believe the words of the absolution.
- THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS**
200. What is the Office of the Keys?
The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.
201. What power has a man to whom a key has been given?
The power to lock or unlock a door.
202. To whom did Jesus give the keys of heaven, or power to open and to close the door of heaven?
To the Christian Church, particularly to every Christian congregation. (Matt. 16:17-19; John 20:22-23; 1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 18:17-20)
203. How does a Christian congregation open the door of heaven?
By forgiving sins.
204. How does a Christian congregation close the door of heaven?
By retaining or not forgiving sins.
205. Whose sins are to be forgiven?
The sins of penitent sinners.
206. Who is a penitent sinner?
One who feels sorry for his sins and believes in Jesus. (The publican. Luke 18:13; the prodigal son. Luke 15:11-24; Peter. Matt. 26:75)

207. Whose sins are to be retained (not forgiven)?
The sins of impenitent sinners.
208. Who is an impenitent sinner?
One who is not sorry for his sins and does not believe.
209. What should a Christian congregation do with a manifest and impenitent sinner, after he has been duly admonished?
It should exclude him from its midst. (Excommunication) Matt. 18:15-20
210. What should a Christian congregation do, when an excommunicated sinner confesses his sin and promises to amend?
It should again receive him/her as a brother/sister. 2 Cor. 2:6-8, 10.
211. Through whom does a Christian congregation publicly administer the Office of the Keys?
Through its called and ordained pastor. (Pastors are stewards of God. 1 Cor. 4:1)
212. What functions does a called and ordained pastor perform in the name of and behalf of a Christian congregation?
He proclaims the Gospel, administers the Sacraments, pronounces absolution, etc.
213. How shall we consider all functions of Christian ministers performed according to the command of God?
It is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself. 2 Cor. 5:19,20
214. How may you enjoy these blessings of the Christian ministry and assist in the building of Christ's Kingdom here on earth?
By affiliating with a Christian Congregation. Acts 2:42.
215. What does the church ask of those accepting membership?
a. Belief in the Triune God and in Christ as the only Savior. Acts 16:31
b. Acceptance of the Scriptures as God's inspired and inerrant Word and as the only rule of Christian life. John 8:31.
c. Sincere determination, with the help of God, to be steadfast in the confession of the Christian faith, to make diligent use of the means of grace, to support the work of the church, and to lead a God-pleasing life.

"Be faithful even to the point of death,
and I will give you the crown of life."
Rev. 2:10

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